

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-02 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-20 OES-07
SP-02 SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 IO-14 NRC-07
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PARIS ALSO FOR OECD, VIENNA FOR IAEA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, MNUC, SP
SUBJECT: ENERGY DEBATE REHEARSAL IN SPANISH CORTES

1. THE APRIL 20 CORTES SESSION FEATURED LENGTHY EXCHANGE BETWEEN COMMUNIST DEPUTY RAMON TAMAMES AND MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND ENERGY RODRIGUEZ SAHAGUN OVER SPANISH ENERGY PLANS, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM, TAMAMES CLAIMED THAT EX-MINISTER OF ECONOMY FUENTES QUINTANA WAS "ELECTROCUTED POLITICALLY" OVER NATIONAL ENERGY PLAN AND THAT PUBLIC IS GREATLY CONCERNED OVER "CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR PLANTS NOT CONTROLLED BY THE JUNTA DE ENERGIA NUCLEAR" AND PLANS FOR SPENT FUEL STORAGE.

2. IN REPLY THE MINISTER SAID THAT INTERNATIONAL SAFETY NORMS WERE USED FOR SPANISH NUCLEAR PLANTS, WITH ABOUT 40 PER CENT OF TOTAL INVESTMENT GOING INTO SAFETY-RELATED FEATURES. RESULT, HE CLAIMED, IS LESS RISK THAN WITH UNCLASSIFIED

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MANY OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH "ARE PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE TO SOCIETY." SPECIFIC QUESTION WAS RAISED BY ANOTHER DEPUTY ON SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES OF COFRENTES PLANT, TO WHICH RODRIGURZ SAHAGUN REPLIED THAT PLANT MEETS ALL LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF SPANISH GOVERNMENT AND THAT PRELIMINARY SAFETY PLAN WAS CARRIED OUT IN STRICT ACCORD WITH INTERNATIONAL CRITERIA. LIMITS SET FOR

ADVERSE EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENT ARE "PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION."

3. WITH REGARD TO REPROCESSING OF NUCLEAR SPENT FUEL, RODRIGUEZ SAHAGUN SAID THAT SPAIN IS PARTICIPATING WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT PRESENT CONDITIONS WOULD NOT JUSTIFY BUILDING INDUSTRIAL REPROCESSING PLANT UNTIL 1990'S. IN INTERIM SPAIN PLANS TO BUILD CENTRAL STORAGE SITE FOR SPENT FUEL.

4. WHEN TAMAMES RECOMMENDED THAT THE MINISTER READ A BOOK, "THE PROMETHEUS CRISIS", CONCERNING THE SO-CALLED "CHINA EFFECT" WHICH ALLEGEDLY WOULD RESULT FROM A REACTOR MELTDOWN, RODRIGUEZ SAHAGUN COUNTERED WITH OFFER TO SEND TAMAMES A COPY OF "THE RISKS OF THE NON-NUCLEAR OPTION". LATTER PREDICTS SERIOUS NEGATIVE IMPACT ON WORLD IF NUCLEAR ENERGY NOT USED FOR FUTURE NEEDS.

5. COMMENT: ENERGY DEBATE IN CORTES WILL GET INTO FULL HEAT WITH SUBMISSION OF NEW ENERGY PLAN, EXPECTED WITHIN NEXT WEEK TO TEN DAYS. ALTHOUGH CONSIDERABLE ANTI-NUCLEAR SENTIMENT CAN BE EXPECTED, IT APPEARS FROM PRESS REPORTS THAT THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES (UCD AND PSOE) WILL ENDORSE NUCLEAR OPTION FOR SPAIN. MORE SERIOUS DIFFERENCES WILL PROBABLY ARISE OVER DEGREE OF GOVERNMENT UNCLASSIFIED

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CONTROL OF ENERGY SECTOR, PARTICULARLY QUESTION OF NATIONALIZATION OF ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION NET AND OF NUCLEAR PLANTS BUILT IN THE FUTURE. STABLER

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